

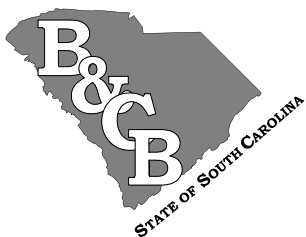
UPDATE

Choosing a Hospital

How can you choose the best quality hospital for the care you need? It is important to consider quality, because research shows that some hospitals simply do a better job than others. For example, we know that hospitals that do a greater number of the same surgeries have better outcomes for their patients. Listed below are qualities that you should look for in a hospital.

1. Accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).
2. Rated highly by State or consumer groups.
3. One where your doctor has privileges, if that is important to you.
4. Covered by your health plan.
5. Experience with your condition.
6. Had success with your condition.

Hospitals can choose to be surveyed by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations to make sure they meet certain quality standards. The standards address the quality of staff, equipment and the hospital's success in treating and curing patients. If a hospital meets those standards, it becomes accredited (gets a "seal of approval"). Reviews are done at least every three years. Most hospitals participate in this program. The JCAHO prepares a performance report on each hospital that it surveys. You can order JCAHO's performance reports free of charge by calling 630-792-5800 or check the JCAHO's Web site at <http://www.jcaho.org> for a hospital's performance report or for its accreditation status.



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